

ENRICHING FALLS CHURCH:
PUBLIC ART SECTION OF THE
COMMUNITY CHARACTER,
APPEARANCE, AND DESIGN
CHAPTER OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted: _____

Introduction:

Public art uses placemaking and storytelling to connect people to their surroundings, whether that is the built environment or nature. It gives the community an enhanced sense of place. Public art adds creative value to a community while also generating local economic activity and expanding the artistic economy. It promotes dialogue amongst residents and visitors alike, allowing issues to be explored and stories to be told in a fun, thoughtful, and interactive way.



The City of Alexandria's "Site/See 2020: Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies" <add photo credit>>

Definition of Public Art

The American Planning Association defines public art as "...any work of art situated in or visible from a publicly accessible space—whether the artwork is publicly or privately funded, or the space is publicly or privately owned." Public art can take the form of visual art such as murals or sculptures, or performance art such as concerts or theatrical performances. The presence of public art in these publicly accessible spaces amplifies character and the community's sense of identity in these areas.

Benefits of Public Art

The benefits of public art span across several realms- economic, social, cultural and health. First, public art promotes economic vitality, growth, and sustainability. As development in the City continues, utilizing public art as a placemaking element creates an attractive area that builds a unique sense of place while also creating a regional draw. Art and cultural activity that invites people to explore and linger within an area provides additional foot traffic to support surrounding businesses. Public art unlocks the opportunity for a community's stories to be visualized and subsequent dialogue explored amongst its community members. Public art allows voices to be heard.

Public art promotes public health and wellbeing. It engages its audience in a way that connects them to their emotions and thoughts, therefore creating a better sense of self-awareness and allowing the opportunity for emotional expression. It holds the potential to better personal wellbeing and mental health. Finally, public art integrates artists and creators as key contributors to their

local community. The inclusion of local artists in the planning and urban design efforts expands community involvement in the development process.



Falls Church, Tinner Hill Arch. Photo Credit: City of Falls Church

Vision & Guiding Principles

The vision for public art in the City of Falls Church is as follows:

“Public Art celebrates the City’s unique history and culture, fosters equity in the artistic narrative, and incorporates creative placemaking to support community development.”

The following guiding principles will serve as components the City will adhere to when considering public art projects to achieve the City’s vision for public art.

1. **A Commitment to Community** – The City of Falls Church is committed to its community and designates space for the open participation and involvement of all its community members. The Arts and Humanities Council is encouraged to focus on community engaged public art and programming in addition to endeavors that may require the import of a particular artist into the City to complete a piece. Through promoting community engagement in this process, it will allow local talent to be discovered and utilized.
2. **A Commitment to Artists as Contributors** – The City of Falls Church is committed to artists as contributors who are able to use public art as a medium to express their own interpretation of the unique community character of Falls Church.
3. **A Commitment to Storytelling** – The City of Falls Church is committed to public art as a method of storytelling that celebrates its unique culture, history and identity through diverse mediums from art walks, to murals, to sculpture and vibrant public spaces.

- 4. **A Commitment to Equity** – The City of Falls Church is committed to equity through the acknowledgement of and proactive efforts to address historical inequalities through public art. Public art and community events are accessible and thoughtful of the representation of multiple and often marginalized narratives
- 5. **A Commitment to the Natural Environment** – Encourage public art that demonstrates a connection between the human experience and nature. The City of Falls Church is a part of Tree City USA, biophilic art within the City could pay homage to this achievement.

Plan Organization

The remaining sections of this plan define the City’s arts and cultural district, provide a set of guiding principles for reviewing public art and identify actions to meet the City’s vision for public art.

How to Use this Plan

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the official policy guide for shaping the future of the City. It establishes priorities for public art efforts and projects to achieve the City’s vision. This plan recognizes that implementation must remain flexible to changing conditions and that priorities will change. This plan should be used as a framework for scheduling projects and documenting completed projects. Specific location and design decisions are intended to be worked out on a project-by-project basis during implementation.



Falls Church, Cherry Hill Park carved sculptures. Photo credit: Tysons Reporter



Boston, Make Way for Ducks. Photo credit: Boston University

Arts & Cultural District

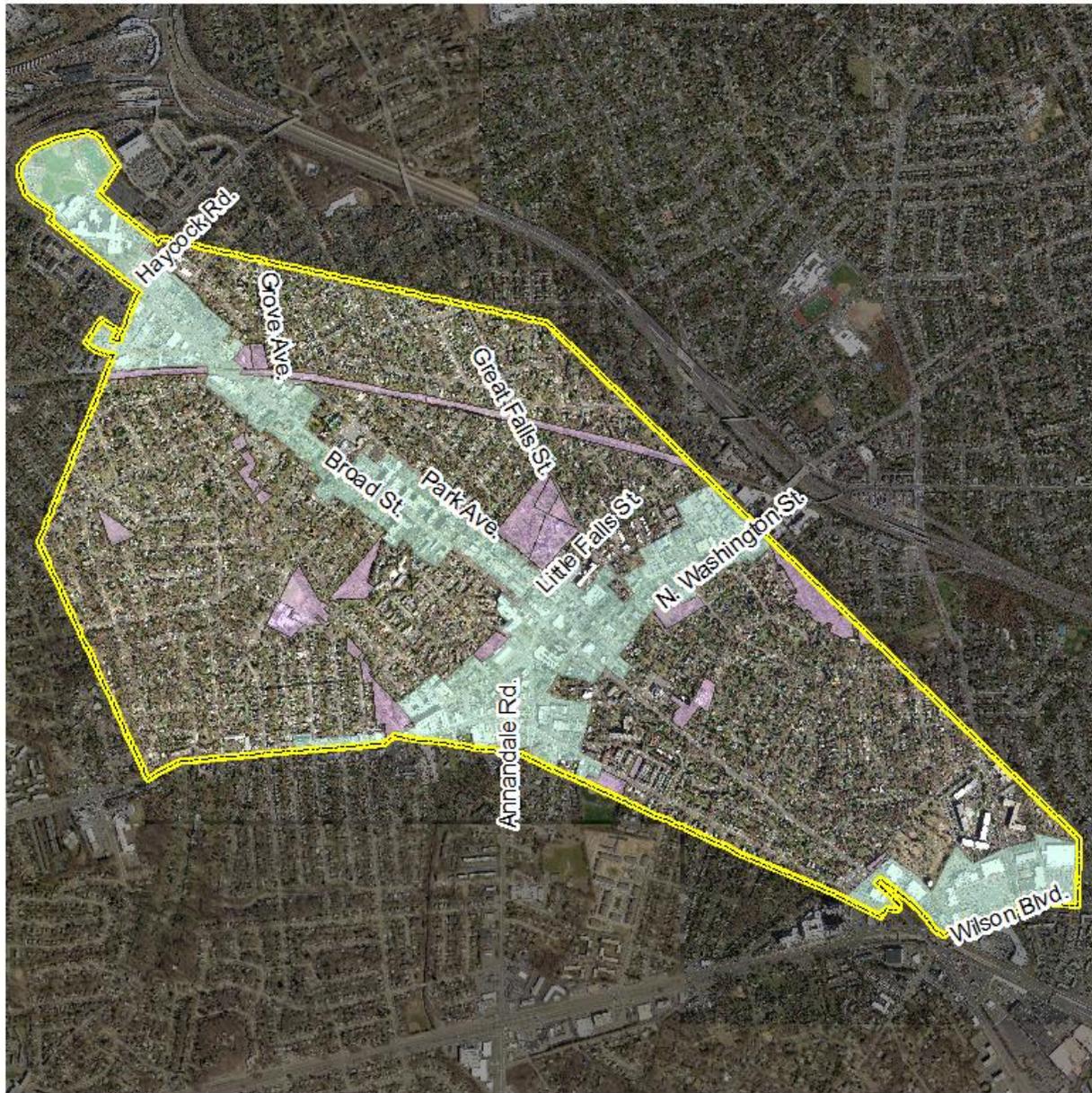
The City of Falls Church's Arts and Cultural District identifies areas in the City where public art should be incorporated. The Arts and Cultural District is an area of the City where art in all forms is the focal point. While this district serves as a focal point for public art, it does not preclude public art from being placed in other areas of the City.

The Arts and Cultural District provides a space to engage cultural consumption and creative activities. This district is an area where places such as art galleries, theaters, music venues, and public spaces for performances can thrive. The programming within the Arts and Cultural District offers a great opportunity to engage in marketing and branding practices as well.

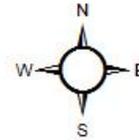
The Arts and Cultural District includes both the City of Falls Church adopted revitalization areas as well as public land such as the City Hall campus, City schools, and parks. The presence of public art in the revitalization areas plays a key role in placemaking and connects the Falls Church of yesterday, today and tomorrow as these sections of the City continually evolve overtime. The placement of public art on public land allows the community's identity to be celebrated and its historic charm showcased through visual expression that is accessible to all. Public land is often used for educational experiences, such as the community center or the City schools, the presence of public art can heighten these experiences.



The mural at Mr. Brown's Park is an example of public art on private property. Photo Credit: Yelp



DRAFT Arts & Cultural District



Legend

-  City Boundary
- Arts & Cultural District***
-  Public Land
-  Revitalization District

*Includes City's Adopted Revitalization Districts & Public Land (Parks, Municipal Buildings, Schools)



0 460 920 1,380 1,840
Feet

Strategies & Actions

The development and implementation of a Public Art Program and Arts and Cultural District within the City of Falls Church is a complex effort that will require both short-term and long-term actions. The following strategies and actions have been identified to realize the City's vision for public art.

Action – Formalize the Arts and Culture District

To create an Arts and Culture District, Virginia Code § 15.2-943.1 requires that the district be adopted by ordinance. The map would establish boundaries pertaining to other elements of the city's public art efforts, such as public investments and encouragement to incorporate public art into private projects.

Action – Establish Procedures for Reviewing and Accepting Public Art

Establish stream-lined procedures for reviewing and accepting public art, whether publicly funded or funded through a developer contribution. The procedures should be consistent with City Charter requirements for Planning Commission review and incorporate input from the Arts & Humanities Council and the Architecture Advisory Board.

Strategy – Expand Efforts to Include Temporary Art

Expand public art efforts to consider temporary displays and installation in addition to permanent installations. Temporary artwork can attract both locals and visitors alike by adding to the city's vibrancy and attractiveness as a destination and a place to visit.

Strategy – Provide Regular Public Funding for Art

Identify and generate consistent funding for public art programming. Consistent funding is a key aspect for public art's success. The City currently has a successful Arts and Humanities Grants program providing project and operational funding for local nonprofits. The City should explore setting aside a portion of the Operating Budget and/or the Capital Improvements Budget for public art each year

Strategy – Partner with Private Individuals and Entities

Work with developers to incorporate public art into redevelopment projects or make an in-lieu contribution to a public art fund.